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TELL Draft

Foundations of Writing

11-22-13

“I don’t want my life to be defined by what is etched on a tombstone. I want it to be defined on what is etched in the lives and hearts of those I’ve touched”. When I was a little girl I looked up to my grandfather, he was one of the most amazing people I have ever met. When I was eight years old, he was diagnosed with cancer. He received his treatment but, we all knew he wasn’t going to make it. I remember distinctly the last time I saw him, it was the night before he died. We were in my mother’s car driving to my grandparents’ home to visit him. For some reason I just knew this would be the last time I would ever see him alive. I got there and he was alive but, he could not really say much, I was terrified and could not stop crying. My mom told me he was going to a better place now. She told me to think about all the good times I had with him, not his death. I then started to think about the time when he gave me my first two dollar bill, he framed it so I would always have it. He gave this to me because he said two dollar bills were unique and one of kind, and that’s exactly what I was too him. I will always cherish that two dollar bill and I keep it in a special place so I will always have it as a remembrance of him. As a young girl death was something I didn’t really understand. In retrospect I now know why my mother told me to think about the memoires I had shared with him. He left such a mark on me and on others. Everyone loved him, he would give his last penny to someone in need. He touched so many lives, especially mine. My mother did not want me to remember him by the way I saw him dying, she wanted me to remember him in a greater way.

Just recently, about a month ago I encountered another death of a very close family member. My Uncle Slimmy was shot and killed. I remember receiving a phone call at quarter to four in the morning and all I could hear was frantic screaming and crying. I said on the phone “what happened? What happened?” And all I heard was “Slimmy! “Slimmy”. I said “Slimmy what?” The next thing I heard was “he’s been shot!” At this moment I had no words, tears started to fill my eyes and I was speechless. I hung up and a couple minutes later called back. I rushed up to Slimmys home, the street was filled with cop cars and ambulances. The family then told me to go to the hospital. When I pulled into the hospital parking lot I got out of my car and started walking toward the emergency room entrance. When I was walking towards the entrance I saw Slimmys brother and sister run out of the doors screaming “he’s dead, he’s gone, and he’s never coming back” I ran up to his sister and all she could do is cry and scream in my arms. This moment was the second most terrifying moment of my life. That’s all we could think about, all we could remember him by for a few days after his death. Every time we walked into Slimmys kitchen all we could think about was the blood we saw all over the floor and the shell casings we found on the ground and nothing more. After coping with his death for a couple of weeks, I realized that we should not be remembering him by this. We should be remembering him by the joy he brought into our lives. We should remember him for all the good he has done. About two weeks ago we held a memorial for him and we had collages, videos and stories to share about how much of an amazing person he was. That’s when it clicked in my head, I will never remember Slimmy by what he endured in his death. I will remember him on how he has influenced me and brought happiness to my life. I then thought of the time he came to BU to visit me with two of my friends. It was in the start of the year and he knew how much I missed home. Slimmy and my friends drove all the way here just to surprise me. We had such a fun night and he made me feel so much better about being here. His random acts of kindness was one of the best things about him.

Those two specific events in my life were two of the worst things I have encountered but, two of the greatest lessons I have ever learned. Slimmy and my grandfather have influenced me greatly to help others and to give a piece of me to others that will always be remembered. I want to make a difference in people’s lives, and this is why I have chosen to be a nurse. I want to be able to save lives and help others in need. I want to give people like Slimmy a chance to live and people like my grandfather a chance to get better. Slimmy and my grandfather have left such an influential mark on my life and I am eternally grateful for having been able to share such great memories with them. In my future, I see myself doing my best to bring happiness to those who need it the most, and I see someone saying to me “I will always remember what you have done for me”. That is a moment that I want to happen in my future. In my future I want to be able to change people’s lives the way Slimmy and my grandfather have changed mine and most importantly, “I don’t want my life to be defined by what is etched on a tombstone. I want it to be defined on what is etched in the lives and hearts of those I’ve touched”.